Shiv Khori,
Reasi District, Jammu and Kashmir

AI Overview

Shiv Khori is a famous natural cave temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, located near Ransoo village in the Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir. The cave, approximately 200 meters long, houses a 4-foot-high self-manifested Shivalinga, also known as the "Abode of the Gods." It is believed that Lord Shiva took refuge here to escape the demon Bhasmasura.

Highlights of Shiv Khodi Yatra:

- **Location:** Around 140 km from Jammu and 80 km from Katra.
- **Secret of the cave: The** 200 meter long cave has 33 crore gods and goddesses and a natural Shivalinga.
- **Visiting Time:** 5 AM to 10 PM (October-March is the best time).
- **Trekking:** From Ransu one has to trek about 3-3.5 km to the cave.
- **Facilities:** Horses (₹500), palanquins (₹1400), and hotels for accommodation are available on the way.
- **Special attraction:** A big fair is held on Mahashivratri.
- **Caution:** Mobile phones are not allowed inside the temple, and one should be careful of monkeys on the way

***”

Ref: Wikipedia

Shiv Khori, is a famous cave shrines of Hindus devoted to lord Shiva, situated in the Sangar village, Pouni, near Reasi town in the Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir in India.

Location

In Reasi district, there are many shrines such as Mata Vaishno Devi, Merhada Mata is one of them located in Ransoo a village in the Pouni block in Reasi district, which attracts lakhs of devotees annually. Shiv Khori is situated in between the hillocks about 140 km north of Jammu, 120 km from Udhampur and 80 km from Katra.and light vehicles go up to Ransoo, the base camp of pilgrimage. People have to traverse about 3 km on foot on a track recently constructed by the Shiv Khori Shrine Board, Ransoo duly headed by the Divisional Commissioner Jammu as chairman and District Development Commissioner, Reasi as vice-chairman.

Description

Khori means cave (Guffa) and *Shiv Khori* thus denotes Shiva's cave. This natural cave is about 200 metres long, one metre wide and two to three metres high and contains a self made lingam, which according to the people is unending. The first entrance of the cave is so wide that 300 devotees can be accommodated at a time. Its cavern is spacious to accommodate large number of people. The inner chamber of the cave is smaller.

The passage from outer to the inner chamber is low and small, at one spot it divides itself into two parts. One of these is believed to have led to Kashmir where Swami Amarnath cave is located. It is now closed as some sadhus who dared to go ahead never returned.[*citation needed*] To reach the sanctum sanctorum, one has to stoop low, crawl or adjust his body sideward. Inside a naturally created image of Lord Shiva, about 4 metres high, is visible. The cave abounds with a number of other natural objects having resemblance with Goddess Parvati, Ganesha and Nandigan. The cave roof is etched with snake formations, the water trickles through these on Shiva Lingam. Pigeons are also seen here like Swami Amar Nath cave which presents good omens for pilgrimages.

Rise in popularity

The Shiv Khori shrine, located in Jammu and Kashmir, was relatively unknown about 40 to 50 years ago but has gained significant popularity in recent decades. Initially, only a few thousand pilgrims visited the site, but following the establishment of the Shiv Khori Shrine Board in December 2003, the number of devotees has increased dramatically. In 2005, the number of visitors surpassed 300,000, and by 2016, it was expected to exceed 2 million.

Approximately 30% of the pilgrims come from within the state, while 70% travel from other states. The shrine hosts an annual three-day Maha Shivratri mela, attracting thousands of pilgrims from various regions to seek blessings from Lord Shiva. This festival typically takes place in February or the first week of March.

Development

Pilgrimage track development

In response to the growing influx of pilgrims, the Shiv Khori Shrine Board has implemented several development initiatives to enhance facilities for devotees. These include the construction of a Shrine Guest House at a cost of Rs. 1.9 million at Ransoo, the base camp, a Reception Centre, and a Pony Shed at an estimated cost of Rs. 8 million. Additionally, tile work on the 3-km track to the shrine is nearing completion, and efforts to plant ornamental and medicinal plants along the route are underway. Other improvements include modern electrification of the cave, provision of oxygen and electric generators, exhaust fans, shelter sheds with toilet facilities, and the installation of railings from the base camp to the shrine.

Facilities for pilgrimage

The Shiv Khori Shrine Board is also working on additional facilities such as a 15,000-liter water reservoir, proper sanitation, a 25 kV electric transformer, cloak rooms, and permanent bus services from Katra, Udhampur, and Jammu. Security arrangements are being enhanced with the establishment of a police post, a dispensary, and an STD PCO. To accommodate the increasing number of pilgrims, an exit tunnel was constructed by the Board in February of an unspecified year to facilitate smooth darshan of Lord Shiva.

Ropeway

See also: Ropeways in India

Shiv Khori ropeway, 2.12 km from Darshan Deori to Shiv Khori Hindu shrine in Reasi district, tender for DPR were cancelled in early 2025 due to the court case and will be reissued.[1]

Shiv Khori to Get Chopper Services

In a significant infrastructural push to improve pilgrim access to Shiv Khori, the 75th meeting of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB), chaired by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, reviewed key development projects including a new helipad at Village Hutt. This project, being executed by the Border Roads Organization (BRO) in collaboration with the Shri Shiv Khori Shrine Board, is aimed at introducing chopper services to the shrine. The Board expressed concern over delays and directed BRO to complete the helipad by October 2025, to offer seamless aerial access for devotees.

Other updates included enhancements to the Yatri Feedback System, expanded sanitation coverage, improved pilgrim safety measures, and the exploration of volunteer services to assist devotees along the route. These initiatives are part of a broader effort to modernize pilgrimage infrastructure while preserving the spiritual and ecological sanctity of the region.[2]

Important places near Shivkhori

- Jammu
- Katra
- Vaishnodevi
- Agharjitto
- NavDevi
- Baba Dhansar
- Reasi
- Bhimgarh Fort

- kalika Temple
- Siar Baba

***

Photos

Shiv Khori cave

The Lingam

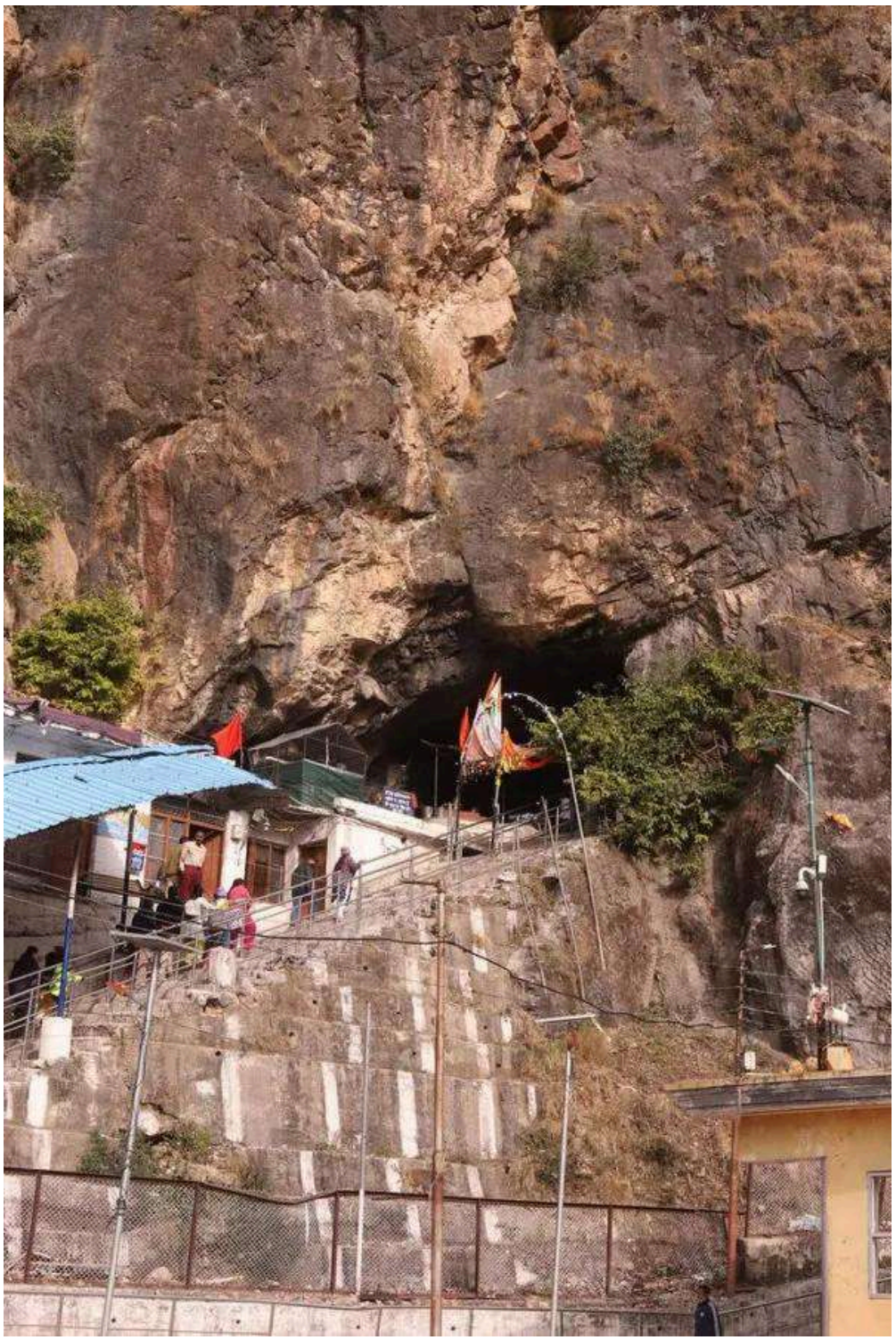
**

Ref: shivkhori.in

Shiv Khori Trek – Complete Guide

Shiv Khori is a cave of Lord Shiva in Jammu. People call it a holy place. The word *Khori* simply means cave. Inside the cave, there is a Shiv Lingam. It is not made by anyone. It looks natural, and water keeps falling on it. Pilgrims believe this water is a gift from Shiva. The walk to reach this cave is known as the Shiv Khori trek. It is not very tough. People of all ages go there. Some walk slowly, some fast, but most reach without any problem. Families bring children, and even elders manage the path.

The area around Shiv Khori Trek route is full of hills, trees, and filled with fresh air. On the way, food and tea are sold in small shops. You hear people chanting Shiva's name. The whole route feels peaceful. During Maha Shivratri, a very large crowd is gathered. Devotees say going to Shiv Khori trek at that time feels special. Many believe that one visit here brings peace in mind and blessings in life. For Shiva's followers, this cave is not just a place. It is a strong spiritual experience.



Location and History of Shiv Khori Trek

Shiv Khori is located in the Reasi district of Jammu. A few hours are taken by road to reach it from Katra to reach the Shiv Khori trek starting point. The way goes through small hills, bends, and villages. The area is full of trees and quiet views. People usually come first to Katra, then continue the journey towards Shiv Khori trek route. The cave is very old. No one knows when it was found. Locals say saints used to sit here for meditation. Many also say the cave has some link to Amarnath, but that part is not proven. What people believe

strongly is that the Shiv Lingam inside formed on its own. That is why it is called swayambhu, a natural form.

Inside the cave, the walk is narrow. It feels like a tunnel. The rocks have shapes that look like gods, animals, and holy signs. Devotees see this as a blessing. Some even say Lord Shiva himself stayed here to protect saints from demons long ago. For villagers near Reasi, Shiv Khori is not only a temple. It is part of their faith and daily life. Every story they tell makes the Shiv Khori trekking experience even more spiritual for new visitors.

How to Reach Shiv Khori

Most people first reach Jammu. It has a big railway station and an airport too. From there, plenty of buses and taxis go towards the Reasi side. Some pilgrims even stop at Katra before moving ahead to Shiv Khori Trek base. The road from Jammu or Katra to Shiv Khori is not very long. Hills, small villages, and green fields are passed through by vehicles. The road is narrow but can be traveled. Shared jeeps, local buses, and private taxis are operated on this route.

They usually drop you near the Shiv Khori trek starting point. From here, the real walk begins.

The Trek Path

Details	Information
Trek Distance	About 3 km (from the base point)
Trek Type	Cemented path – easy for children and elders
Help for Pilgrims	Ponies and palkis (carried by locals) available
Food & Water	Tea stalls, water, and small snack shops on the way
Best Time to Walk	Morning – weather stays cooler and fresh

The Shiv Khori trek is not rough like other Himalayan paths. Since it's cemented, families with kids or elderly people manage without much trouble. The whole journey feels spiritual. As you climb, you hear chants of "Bam Bam Bhole," bells from nearby stalls, and the green hills around. The trek is not tough, only about faith and patience.

Shiv Khori Trek Route - From Ransoo to the Sacred Cave

The journey to Shiv Khori trek starts at Ransoo village. That's where people leave their cars or buses. From here, the walk begins. The trek is about three kilometers. Don't worry—it is not a jungle path. The way is built with stone and cement, and side railings are also there. This makes it safe for elders and kids too.

The path is traveled a little uphill. It is not very steep, but a bit of tiredness can be caused. Families often stop in between. At some spots, benches have been placed so that sitting and resting for a while is possible. Every few steps, you'll find small shops. They sell tea, water bottles, biscuits, and sometimes prasad. This stop make the Shiv Khori Trek experience enjoyable. The best part? The views. Green hills, tall trees, and deep valleys keep showing up on the way. In the morning, the air feels extra fresh. Pilgrims keep chanting "Har Har Mahadev." That sound fills the whole trek with energy.

Finally, the cave appears, because the entrance is narrow, only a few people are permitted to enter at one time. Once the cave is entered, the atmosphere is changed. It is long and a bit dark, but the lights are fixed inside. At the end, the natural Shiv Lingam is seen. Drops of water fall on it all the time, making it shine. For devotees, this moment feels truly divine.

Step by Step Journey

Ransoo Village → Trek Path → Shops & Hillside Views → Cave Entrance → Shiv Lingam

Facilities Available on Shiv Khori Trek

Starting from Ransoo

Your journey begins at Ransoo, the base of Shiv Khori. Here you'll find small guest houses, dharamshalas, and basic food stalls. Pilgrims usually take some rest here before starting the trek.

Walking Path

The path from Ransoo to the cave is made of cement. Railings are fixed on many sides so that walking becomes easy, especially for children and elders. Lights are also there, which helps if you are late.

Shops on the Way

On both sides of the trek, small shops are run by locals. You'll get tea, snacks, water bottles, and prasad for offering inside the cave. A few shops also keep small medicines and walking sticks.

Rest Spots

If you get tired, benches are placed on the route where you can sit. For old people or those who cannot walk, ponies and palkis are also available, arranged by locals.

Facilities Near Cave

As you come closer to the cave, there are toilets and drinking water taps. Medical help and volunteers are also present during special occasions like Shivratri.

Pilgrim Experience at Shiv Khori

Walking on the Shiv Khori trek feels simple. Not very hard. People walk slowly, take breaks, and keep talking to each other. You see hills, trees, and hear birds. Some keep chanting “Bum Bum Bhole” all the way. That sound gives energy. The path has shops after short gaps. Tea, water, snacks, prasad are all sold. Children stop at shops often. Elders walk steady. Some sit on benches and rest.

The cave itself feels very different. The entry is small, like a narrow gate. Inside it is long, a bit dark. Lights are fixed but still quiet. The Shiv Lingam is there, always wet with water drops. People touch the floor, fold hands, and pray. Some rocks look like Nandi or Parvati. Devotees believe those shapes are not man-made. People say they feel peace inside, some even feel strong energy. For many, reaching here after the trek feels like Shiva gave darshan.

The Shiv Khori trek experience is not just walking. It is faith mixed with nature. People return with prasad, with stories, and with a calm mind.

Travel Tips for Shiv Khori Yatra

Start Early

Begin your trek in the morning. The sun is soft, and walking feels easy.

Carry Water

Keep a bottle with you, though shops are available on the way.

Footwear

Wear light shoes or slippers that do not slip. The cement path can be wet in some places.

Walking Support

A stick helps elders. Kids should always walk with someone.

Travel Light

Heavy bags should not be carried. Only water, light snacks, and a shawl should be kept if the weather is cool.

Camera Rules

Cameras are allowed outside, not inside the cave. Inside, just pray and follow the line.

During Shivratri

Crowds are very heavy. Book stay early as dharamshalas and guest houses fill fast. Locals also provide rooms.

Respect the Place

Avoid throwing plastic, don't push in the line, and move slowly.

For Non-Walkers

Pony and palki services are available for those who cannot walk.

Peaceful Journey

With simple planning, the trek is safe, people are helpful, and the yatra feels peaceful.

Conclusion

The Shiv Khori trek is simple but full of meaning. It is not only a walk to a cave. For many, it is a chance to feel close to Lord Shiva. The cave with the natural Shiv Lingam is special, and the water drops falling on it make people believe Shiva is always present here. The route is safe, with railings, shops, and places to rest. Families, elders, and children can do it without much problem. Ponies and palkis are there for support. During Maha Shivratri, the energy is felt to be very high, but a large crowd is also encountered, so planning is required.

People who visit often say they return with peace of mind. Some call it a blessing. Some feel strength. The Shiv Khori trek gives both a journey through nature and a deep spiritual touch. For anyone who loves Shiva or wants a calm place in the hills, this yatra is worth doing once in life. The memory of the cave, the chants, and the simple walk stays with you for long.

***

Ref: GrokAI

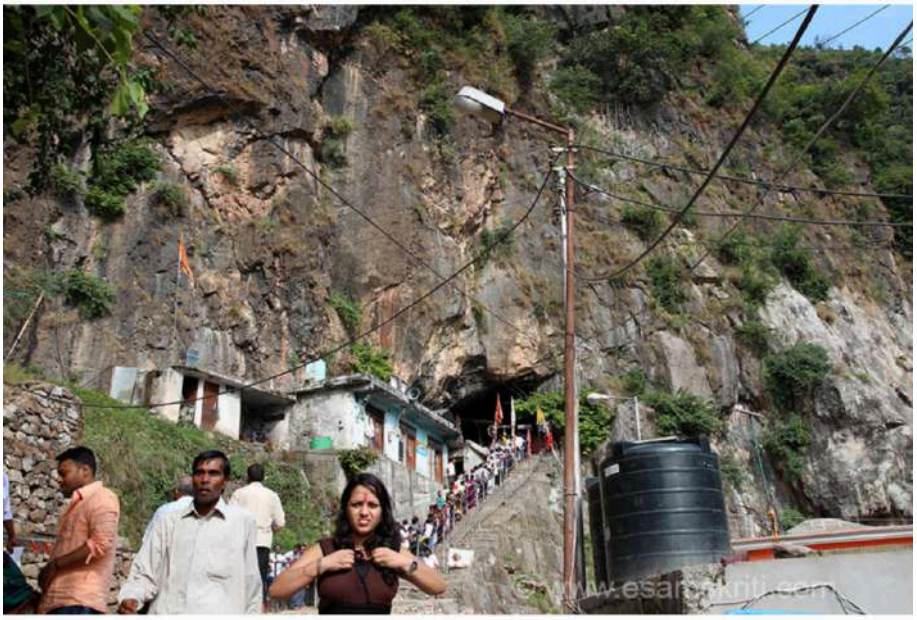
Shiv Khori …cave shrine

1. Shiv Khori Cave Shrine (Shri Shiv Khori / Shivkhori)
Location, Address, Phone
Holy natural cave shrine of Lord Shiva in Sangar village, Pouni block, Reasi district, Jammu & Kashmir. Base camp: Ransoo village on Reasi-Rajouri Road.
Address: Shri Shiv Khori Shrine Board, Ransoo, Reasi District, J&K – 185203.
Official Website: www.shivkhori.in
Contact:

- Shrine Board: +91-1991-244123 / +91-1991-262068
- Email: sdmreasi@jk.nic.in or shivkhori@yahoo.co.in
  (For help/complaints; managed by Shri Shiv Khori Shrine Board, Chairman: Divisional Commissioner Jammu).

How to Get There

- **From Katra**: ~80 km (2–2.5 hrs by bus/taxi).
- **From Jammu**: 112–129 km (via Akhnoor or Katra).
- **From Reasi**: 40–57 km.
  Buses/taxis reach Ransoo base camp. From Ransoo: 3–4 km scenic uphill trek (1–1.5 hrs on foot) or pony/palki/pithoo (prepaid counters only; keep receipt). No vehicles inside. Yatra slip may be required in peak season.



Shiv Khori Cave

Greatness of This Temple

One of the most revered natural cave shrines of Lord Shiva in Jammu & Kashmir. Attracts lakhs of devotees annually (up to 20 lakh in recent years). The self-manifested Shivling and natural formations of 33 crore deities create a powerful spiritual experience. Managed by the Shrine Board since 2003; ideal add-on to Vaishno Devi yatra (only ~80 km away).

Legends and History

Legend: Demon Bhashmasur received a boon from Shiva to kill anyone by placing hand on their head. He tried to use it on Shiva, who escaped with Parvati and Nandi to this cave. Natural formations inside are believed to be divine manifestations. The cave was relatively unknown decades ago but gained massive popularity after the Shrine Board was formed.

Architecture of Temple, Deities

Natural cave temple (no man-made structure). Cave is ~150 m long with low passages (devotees may need to stoop/crawl in places).

- Main deity: 4-ft high natural Svayambhu Shivling (self-manifested).
- Walls show natural rock pindies/forms interpreted as Lord Shiva's family (Parvati, Ganesha, Kartikeya, Nandi) and symbols of 33 crore deities (Sheshnag, etc.). Some believe a hidden tunnel leads towards Amarnath.

Shiv Khori - Wikipedia

Sub-Deities
All natural rock formations inside the cave representing Shiva's family and other deities.

Daily Rituals and Poojas and Their Charges

- Daily Aarti (morning & evening) performed before the Shivling.
- Personal Puja, Rudrabhishek, Bhog Arpan, Vastra Arpan, Lagan (marriage) ceremonies available.
- Book/perform at Ransoo counter (provide name/gotra/sankalp). No fixed online charges listed; pay at counter (older records mention ~₹5,100 for Rudrabhishek, ~₹500 for special Aarti – confirm current rates on-site). Darshan is free.

Special Poojas and Rituals and Their Charges
Same as above; special Aarti and Rudrabhishek on request. Advance coordination needed for marriage rituals. Details/charges at Shrine Board counter in Ransoo.

Festivals

- **Maha Shivratri**: Main 3-day Mela/fair (thousands attend; peaks in Feb/March).
- Annual Shiv Khori Festival (July/August).

Facilities for Devotees

- Tourist Reception Centre-cum-Sarai at Ransoo (JKTDC).
- Private guesthouses/hotels at Ransoo.
- Pony/palki/pithoo from prepaid counters.
- Cloak room (mandatory deposit of phones, cameras, leather items).
- Basic langar/shelters along track.

Important Do's and Don'ts for Visitors (see combined section below).

Donation Info
Donations in cash/cheque at counters or donation boxes only. Obtain receipt. No public bank account details published; all transparent via Shrine Board counters.

Nearby Temples
Baba Dhansar Temple (nearby), Shri Mata Vaishno Devi (Katra), Nau Devi Temple.

Other Tourist Attractions
Reasi town, Bhimgarh Fort, scenic views on Reasi-Rajouri Road, Patnitop (further).

Nearby Budget Hotels

- At Ransoo: Limited guesthouses/Sarai (affordable).
- Better options in Katra (~80 km): Many budget hotels (₹1,000–3,000/night) like those near Vaishno Devi route.
  Check current rates on Booking.com or local enquiry.

Any Other Info

- Best time: Year-round, but Maha Shivratri is spiritually peak (very crowded).
- Carry torch/water/light snacks; track is paved but steep. No photography inside cave. Jai Shiv Shankar!

***

Baba Dhansari Temple

2. Baba Dhansar Temple (Bawa Dhansar / Karua Jheel Temple)
Location, Address, Phone
Located at Karua Jheel (sacred pond) near Karua village, Reasi district, Jammu & Kashmir.
Address: Baba Dhansar Temple, Karua Village, Reasi District, J&K – 182301 (approx 15–17 km from Katra towards Reasi).
Contact: +91-94191-97218 (temple/Facebook page) or local +91-70065-93763. No formal shrine board; managed locally.

How to Get There

- **From Katra**: 15–17 km by road (30–45 min by taxi/bus).
- **From Reasi**: ~17 km.
- Roadside parking; then 200 m walk or ~70–150 stairs downhill to the temple complex. Easy access, no long trek.

Greatness of This Temple
A serene natural Shiva temple and cave shrine with a beautiful waterfall and sacred pond. Closely linked to Amarnath legend via Sheshnag. Offers peace, meditation, and blessings of Shiva & Nag Devta. Popular side visit after Vaishno Devi yatra; known for natural beauty and spiritual calm.

Legends and History

When Lord Shiva went to Amarnath to tell Parvati the secret of immortality, He left Sheshnag at Anantnag (who took human form as Vasudev). Baba Dhansar was one of Vasudev's sons – a saintly figure. A demon terrorized Karua village; villagers sought Dhansar's help. Dhansar prayed to Shiva, who appeared and helped slay the demon. The temple and Shiva cave were established in gratitude.

Architecture of Temple, Deities

Natural open-air temple with a small cave (Shiv Ji Ki Gufa). Crystal-clear waterfall flows into a sacred pond (Karua Jheel). Main worship at the cave/shrine dedicated to Lord Shiva and Baba Dhansar (serpent deity/Nag Devta). Peaceful, moss-covered rocks and flowing water create a divine natural setting.

Sub-Deities

Baba Dhansar (Nag Devta) along with Lord Shiva in the cave.

Daily Rituals and Poojas and Their Charges

Simple daily aarti and puja by local priests. No entry fee or fixed charges. Offerings are voluntary and personal.

Special Poojas and Rituals and Their Charges

No formal special poojas with charges. Devotees perform personal prayers and aarti. Mahashivratri sees special rituals.

Festivals
Maha Shivratri: Annual Mela/fair with large crowds; devotees bathe downstream in the sacred waters.

Facilities for Devotees

- No formal accommodation at site (basic facilities).
- Nearby langar/tea stalls possible during festivals.
- Natural beauty for short visit (1–2 hrs). Stay in Katra or Reasi.

Important Do's and Don'ts for Visitors (see combined section below).

Donation Info
Voluntary offerings at the temple. No formal bank account or online system; local priests manage.

Nearby Temples
Shiv Khori Cave Shrine, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi (Katra), Nau Devi Temple.

Other Tourist Attractions
Karua Jheel (sacred pond – no bathing in main pond; downstream allowed), scenic waterfall, views of surrounding hills and Chenab river.

Nearby Budget Hotels
Best in **Katra** (15–17 km away): Many budget options (₹1,000–3,000/night) near bus stand or yatra route. Reasi also has basic hotels. Check current availability online or locally.

Any Other Info

- Open 24 hours; best visited in morning/evening.
- Carry water; area can be slippery near waterfall.
- Respect the sacred pond – no bathing or polluting the main Jheel.
- Perfect half-day trip combined with Shiv Khori or Vaishno Devi.

Important Do's and Don'ts for Visitors to Both Temples (Common Guidelines)
Do's:

- Maintain silence and chant "Om Namah Shivaya" or "Har Har Mahadev".
- Wear clean, modest clothes; remove shoes/leather items before entering caves.
- Deposit phones/cameras/electronics in cloak room (mandatory at Shiv Khori).
- Use only prepaid pony/palki counters.
- Deposit donations only in official boxes/counters and take receipt.
- Respect nature – no littering.

Don'ts:

- No non-veg food, liquor, tobacco, or intoxicants in shrine area.
- No photography/videography inside caves.
- Do not harm animals/plants or spoil water.
- No rushing/queue jumping; no begging.
- Do not carry weapons, coconuts (at Shiv Khori), or litter.
- No sleeping or sitting with back to sanctum.

Combined Nearby Info
Both temples are in Reasi district and easily combined in one day from Katra. Other attractions: Patnitop, Sanasar, Reasi Fort. Plenty of budget hotels in Katra (highly recommended base).

Note: All information compiled from official Shrine Board websites, government tourism pages, and reliable sources (as of 2026). Timings, charges, and facilities may change – confirm on www.shivkhori.in or by calling before visit.

Jai Shiv Shankar! Har Har Mahadev! 🙏

***

Ref: Google Gemini

What is Shiv Khori?

After visiting the Goddess at Vaishno Devi, it is traditional to seek the blessings of Lord Shiva at these two nearby shrines.

Shiv Khori is a famous cave shrine dedicated to **Lord Shiva**, located in the Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir. The word *"Khori"* means a cave (or a narrow lane), and the shrine is renowned for its natural stalagmite formation that represents a **4-foot-high natural Shiva Lingam**.

1. Location and Access

- **Location:** Situated in Ransoo village, about **75 km from Katra**.
- **The Trek:** Unlike the 12 km trek to Vaishno Devi, the trek here is much shorter—approximately **3 to 4 km** from the base camp at Ransoo.
- **Connectivity:** Most pilgrims at Katra hire a taxi for a day trip. The drive takes about 3 hours through very scenic, hilly terrain.

2. The Cave's Unique Features

- **The "Meandering" Cave:** The cave is nearly **200 meters long**. It starts wide but becomes very narrow and low in certain sections, requiring devotees to bend or crawl slightly—a physical experience that many find spiritually cleansing.
- **Natural Formations:** Apart from the main Shiva Lingam, the cave ceiling and walls have natural limestone formations that devotees identify as:
    - **The Jata (matted hair)** of Lord Shiva.
    - **The Goddess Parvati** and **Lord Ganesha**.
    - **The Kamdhenu (wish-fulfilling cow)**, with formations that look like udders from which water (symbolizing milk) naturally drips onto the Lingam.

3. The Legend (Bhasmasura)

The most famous legend associated with Shiv Khori involves the demon **Bhasmasura**.

- After receiving a boon from Lord Shiva that anyone he touched on the head would turn to ashes, the demon tried to test it on Shiva himself.
- Lord Shiva is said to have entered this cave to hide from the demon.
- Eventually, **Lord Vishnu** took the form of the enchantress **Mohini** and tricked Bhasmasura into touching his own head during a dance, ending the threat.

4. Festivals and Rituals

- **Maha Shivratri:** This is the most significant event at the shrine. A major 3-day mela (fair) is held, attracting lakhs of devotees.

- **Daily Poojas:** Similar to Vaishno Devi, there are morning and evening aartis. The atmosphere inside the cave, with the sound of chanting echoing off the natural stone, is said to be incredibly powerful.

5. Practical Info for this Write-up

- **Accommodation:** While most people stay in Katra, there are basic guesthouses and a Shrine Board TRC (Tourist Reception Centre) at Ransoo.
- **Best Time to Visit:** Much like Katra, it is accessible year-round, but the months of October to April are most pleasant.
- **Ponies/Palkies:** These are available at the Ransoo base camp for those who cannot walk the 3 km uphill.

Many pilgrims consider their journey to the region incomplete without visiting both Vaishnodevi and Shiv Khori.

1. Daily Rituals and Special Poojas

The Shri Shiv Khori Shrine Board (SSKSB) has structured several options for devotees to participate in sacred rituals.

Pooja/Ritual Type	Description	Approx. Charges (2026)
Routine Darshan	General entry to the cave for a glimpse of the self-manifested Lingam.	Free
Special Aarti	Participation in the morning or evening Aarti inside the cave.	₹2,100 (Individual) ₹5,100 (Group of 4)
₹2,100 (Individual) ₹5,100 (Group of 4)		
Rudrabhishek	A powerful ritual bathing of the Shiva Lingam with Vedic chants.	₹2,100 (Individual) ₹5,100 (Group of 4)
₹2,100 (Individual) ₹5,100 (Group of 4)		
Group Packages	Aarti or Abhishek for larger groups (up to 10 people).	₹11,000

- **Timings:** The cave is generally open for Darshan from **6:00 AM to 7:00 PM**.
- **Booking:** Tickets can be obtained at the **official Shrine Board counter in Ransoo** (the base camp). It is advisable to write down your "Gotra" on a piece of paper beforehand for the *Sankalp* (vow).

2. Donation Information & Bank Details

Donations contribute to the maintenance of the cave, the track, and the "Free Langar" (community kitchen) for pilgrims.

- **Official Beneficiary:** Shri Shiv Khori Shrine Board
- **Bank:** Jammu & Kashmir Bank
- **Branch:** Reasi
- **Account Number:** 0029040500020788
- **IFSC Code:** JAKA0REASSI

3. Facilities for Visitors

- **RFID Tracking:** Similar to Vaishno Devi, pilgrims must often register and may be issued tracking cards at the Ransoo base camp for safety.
- **Locker Facility:** Since electronic gadgets, cameras, and leather items are strictly prohibited inside the narrow cave, free or nominal-fee lockers are provided at the cave entrance.
- **Transport:** For the 3.5 km uphill trek, **Ponies, Palkies (palanquins), and Pithoos (porters)** are available at regulated rates from the Ransoo prepaid counter.
- **Accommodation:** The Shrine Board operates a **Tourist Reception Centre (TRC)** at Ransoo with basic rooms and dormitory beds.

4. Essential Do’s and Don’ts

- **Do:** Wear traditional or modest clothing. Men are encouraged to wear Dhotis or Kurta-Pyjamas, and women Saree or Salwar Kameez.
- **Do:** Carry a small flashlight, as the interior of the cave can be dim, although it is now partially electrified.
- **Don't:** Attempt to carry mobile phones or cameras into the cave; the restriction is strictly enforced to maintain sanctity and security.
- **Don't:** Carry heavy luggage on the trek. Use the cloakrooms at the base camp.
- **Caution:** The cave becomes very narrow at the "Garbh Joon" equivalent point. Devotees with severe claustrophobia or breathing issues should consult the local staff before entering the deepest sections.

5. Other Useful Info for this Documentation

- **The Stalactite "Milk":** A fascinating point for your write-up is the natural limestone formation above the Lingam that looks like a cow's udder (Kamdhenu), from which water consistently drips, naturally performing a perpetual *Abhishek*.
- **Nearby Attraction:** After Shiv Khori, many tourists visit the **Baba Dhansar** temple (approx. 30 km away), famous for its cool spring water and emerald-green pond.

Baba Dhansar is widely considered one of the most beautiful and spiritually peaceful spots in the Jammu region. It serves as a perfect addition to your document, as it is located right on the way between Katra and Shiv Khori.

Baba Dhansar Temple

1. Location and Access

- **Location:** Situated at Karua Jheel (Pond) near Karua village, approximately **15–17 km from Katra** towards Reasi.

- **How to Get There:** It is easily accessible by taxi or bus from Katra. From the main road, visitors must descend a series of about **200–300 stone steps** to reach the holy site.
- **The Setting:** The temple is famous for its picturesque natural spring and a stunning waterfall that drops into a turquoise-colored pond (Karua Jheel).

2. Legends and History

- **The Serpent Connection:** Legend says that when Lord Shiva went to Amarnath to reveal the secret of immortality to Parvati, he left his serpent king, **Sheshnag**, at Anantnag. Sheshnag took human form as Vasudev. One of his sons, **Dhansar**, was a saintly soul who meditated here.
- **The Demon of Karua:** In ancient times, a demon plagued the local villagers. Baba Dhansar prayed to Lord Shiva for help. Shiva appeared and defeated the demon, making the spot a permanent place of worship.

3. Architecture and Deities

- **The Cave Shrine:** Like Shiv Khori, this is a **natural cave temple** dedicated to Lord Shiva.
- **The Natural Abhishek:** A unique feature is a natural Shivalingam located near a rivulet where droplets of "milky" water from the overhead rocks fall continuously onto it.

4. Daily Rituals and Charges

- **Timings:** Generally open from **5:00 AM to 9:00 PM**.
- **Aarti:** Morning Aarti is usually at **6:20 AM** and Evening Aarti at **7:20 PM**.
- **Charges:** There is **no entry fee**. Most rituals like simple Darshan are free. For specific personal poojas (like a specialized Abhishek), devotees usually offer a voluntary donation or a small fee to the local priests, typically ranging from **₹101 to ₹501**.

Budget Hotels and Accommodation

Since many devotees visit both Shiv Khori and Baba Dhansar as part of a circuit, you can find budget options in two main areas:

Near Shiv Khori (Ransoo Base Camp)

These are ideal if you want to start the Shiv Khori trek early in the morning.

1. **New Tridev Hotel:** Located right at the Main Gate in Ransoo. Rates usually start around **₹1,200 – ₹1,600** per night. It is well-rated for being clean and close to the starting point.
2. **Hotel Ashoka:** A very basic budget guest house in Ransoo with rates often below **₹1,000**.
3. **Shrine Board TRC (Ransoo):** Managed by the Shiv Khori Shrine Board, offering very affordable dormitory beds (approx. **₹150–₹200**) and basic rooms.

In Katra (General Base)

Most travelers prefer staying in Katra because of the wider variety of food and transport.

1. **Hotel Green View:** A reliable budget choice near the bus stand.
2. **Hotel Krishna Palace:** Known for being pilgrim-friendly and economical.
3. **Shradhulu Niwas:** Part of the Shrine Board's budget accommodations in Katra.

Important Do’s and Don’ts for Baba Dhansar

- **Bathing Taboo:** Bathing in the main **Karua Jheel (Pond)** is strictly prohibited as it is considered sacred. However, there is a designated area **downstream** where devotees are permitted to bathe in the holy spring water.
- **Photography:** Usually allowed in the garden and waterfall area, but check for signs before photographing inside the small cave shrine.
- **Slippery Steps:** The steps down to the temple can be very slippery during the monsoon or early morning; please advise readers to wear shoes with a good grip.

This completes the trio of major sites (Vaishno Devi, Shiv Khori, and Baba Dhansar).

**

Donation and Bank Details: Baba Dhansar

The Baba Dhansar temple is managed by the **Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB)**. Therefore, all official donations are processed through the main Shrine Board accounts, which are used for the upkeep of the entire circuit, including the Karua Jheel area.

- **Official Beneficiary:** Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB)
- **Bank:** HDFC Bank
- **Branch:** Katra
- **Account Number:** 23441450000128
- **IFSC Code:** HDFC0002344
- **Donation Note:** If sending a cheque or draft, it is recommended to address it to the *"Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB"* and specify "For Baba Dhansar Maintenance" in a covering letter or on the back of the instrument to ensure the funds are allocated accordingly.

Structured Summary: Shiv Khori & Baba Dhansar (2026 Edition)

Feature	Shiv Khori Cave Shrine	Baba Dhansar Temple
Primary Deity	Lord Shiva (Natural Lingam)	Lord Shiva (Natural Lingam)
Location	Ransoo, Reasi (75 km from Katra)	Karua Jheel (17 km from Katra)
Access	3.5 km trek from Ransoo base	~200 steps down from main road
Key Legend	Escape of Shiva from Bhasmasura	Meditation of Saint Dhansar
Unique Feature	200m long meandering cave	Natural waterfall & turquoise pond
Natural Phenomenon	Water dripping from 'cow udders'	Milky water dripping from ceiling
Major Festival	Maha Shivratri (3-day Mela)	Annual Mela on Maha Shivratri
RFID Required	Yes (Available at Ransoo)	No (Usually open access)
Photography	Prohibited inside the cave	Prohibited inside the cave
Locker Facility	Available at cave entrance	Small lockers near the steps

Quick Connectivity Guide:

- **Transport:** Taxis are available from Katra for a combined "Shiv Khori - Baba Dhansar - Nau Devi" day trip.
- **Accommodation:**
    - **Budget:** *New Tridev Hotel* (Ransoo), *Hotel Ashoka* (Ransoo).
    - **Board-Run:** *Tourist Reception Centre* (Ransoo) - basic and economical.
- **Medical:** Basic health post available at the Ransoo base camp.

This structured format should serve as an excellent summary or "At a Glance" page for this document.

***

Videos

Katra to Shiv Khori by bus and darshan…full details (23 min):

https://youtu.be/imfub_F1OEw?si=vfs3382UsGIxMoS1

Mysterious cave of Shiv Khori (4 min):

https://youtu.be/Utldu6Dokog?si=APsBksLePhDXQuX4

Shiv Khori Yatra 2025 (30 min):

https://youtu.be/Ck_oSTQFAQY?si=Aq5LYKP9dwFwxfvo

Shiv Khori Yatra, darshan (13 min):

https://youtu.be/befbdiXNJb4?si=uA93TEIkNcqumuaR

Baba Dhansar temple, Katra (6 min):

https://youtu.be/H6jR0PUIDoU?si=eANNoHTN2h3M63qH

Baba Dhansar temple, Katra (8 min):

https://youtu.be/-hat-RR8IyQ?si=vVimZIhUHz-x_fyQ

***

Dr. M. Thirumaleshwar

April 2, 2026

****